United Nations A/70/PV.1

General Assembly
Seventieth session

Official Records

1st plenary meeting
Tuesday, 15 September 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Lykketoft ..... (Denmark)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Opening of the session by the President of the General Assembly

The President: I declare open the seventieth session of the General Assembly.

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President: In accordance with rule 62 of the rules of procedure, I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Statement by the President

The President: It is my great honour to open this, the seventieth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, a session that I hope will be truly historic, a session not just of ground-breaking decisions, but one of much-needed concerted action for people and planet.

Let me begin by once again thanking the Member States for entrusting me to lead the world's most representative multilateral body. I also see their endorsement of me as an endorsement of the role that Denmark has played at the United Nations over the past 70 years. I will do my utmost to represent each country in a fair and open manner. As I do so, I will try to build upon the solid foundations laid by my predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa. I congratulate him in particular on shepherding the post-2015 negotiations to a successful conclusion, well in advance of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. I thank him and his Office for their close cooperation and support in recent months.

Let me also take this opportunity to recognize the crucial role played by the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in his tenure thus far, not least in supporting the emergence of a truly ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I very much look forward to working closely and in a collaborative manner with him over the coming year.

In less than 10 days' time, our leaders will gather in the General Assembly Hall to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a seminal — in fact, revolutionary, universal agreement befitting this anniversary year — and a welcome gift to a world beset by war and humanitarian crises, sectarianism and violent extremism, by poverty and inequalities, by climate change and environmental degradation.

In signing up to the 2030 Agenda, Governments will voluntarily commit to take action for the dignity, security, prosperity and human rights of our shared humanity; for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; for the sound management and fair distribution of the Earth's finite resources' and for the health and vitality of our planet. It raises hope of the

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

15-28119 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

United Nations being fit for purpose and committed to action.

The challenge now, and a major priority for my presidency, is to ensure that all actors move swiftly to deliver on the promises being made. The summit, of course, will mark only the beginning. There is an urgent need for action right across the three pillars of the United Nations, and ample opportunities to do so during this session.

Not long after the summit and general debate, our leaders will come together in Paris for the twenty-first Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. An ambitious and universal climate agreement is an absolute must, and must be the first real test of the world community's ability to deliver the necessary policy tools for sustainable development.

But there will be no sustainable development without peace and security and without respect for human rights. The United Nations and its States Members have a strong obligation to work together to end the catastrophic wars and conflicts — in and around Syria, in the greater Middle East, in Africa and even in Europe. And we have to act here and now to address the huge and explosive refugee crises resulting from ongoing conflicts, and to protect the human rights of all refugees.

With the conclusion of the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, the release of the global study on women and peace and security, the forthcoming plan of action to prevent violent extremism, the review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism trategy, and the recently published report of the High-level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/70/95), there is significant scope to demonstrate our commitment to action across the broad range of peace and security during this session.

Among other important issues, I will also preside over the high-level meeting in December on the World Summit on the Information Society. I will hold a special session of the General Assembly in the spring of 2016 on the world drug problem, as well as a high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS. And, in May, the Secretary-General will convene a world humanitarian summit — an incredibly timely and crucial initiative.

In addition, we must continue our efforts to revitalize the work of the Assembly. Responding to the continued interest among many Member States in both the reform of the Security Council and in creating more transparency and openness when selecting the next Secretary-General, I will continue the work mandated by Member States on both of those issues.

We must also ensure constructive negotiations relating to the United Nations budget, and I will consult widely in the coming months to ensure their timely conclusion.

Finally, during this session, several events will take place to commemorate the seventieth anniversary, including a high-level event on peace and security on 1 to 2 October; another to mark the entry into force of the Charter of the United Nations, on 23 October; and an another to mark the seventieth anniversary of the first session of the General Assembly, on 11 January 2016.

With such a busy schedule ahead of us, I am keenly aware of the pressure that all Missions to the United Nations will face. The three high-level thematic debates that I will hold in my capacity as President, therefore, will aim to complement ongoing activities and to take stock of each of the three pillars of the United Nations. The United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda and the general debate will be the starting points for these discussions, with their focus, respectively, on sustainable development and the road ahead for peace and security and for human rights.

The first high-level thematic debate will be dedicated to the implementation of commitments relating to sustainable development, climate change and financing. It will take place in April. In this way I will endeavour to mobilize and catalyse individual, collective, multilateral and multi-stakeholder action to support early progress on realizing our global goals.

The second high-level thematic debate will take place in May. It will focus on strengthening the role and performance of the United Nations in the area of peace and security. It will serve as a platform for an open and frank exchange of views and could span the full spectrum of threats to global security. One of the key deliverables from this debate will be to draw out synergies from the three major peace and security-related reviews now at various stages of advancement: the peace operations review, the review of peacebuilding, and the global study on women and peace and security.

The third high-level thematic debate will be organized next July and will revolve around human rights. Here, the focus will be on the role of the United Nations in the field of human rights, including in relation to governance, the rule of law, gender equality and institution-building. Taking into account the unprecedented scale of global humanitarian challenges, particular focus will be placed on addressing the needs of the hundreds of millions of men, women and children affected by conflicts and disasters.

It is my hope that these events can help us to identify pragmatic and action-oriented outcomes in each area. To that end, I will consider holding support meetings to explore particular issues or elements that warrant additional focus or preparation. I will conduct all activities in as transparent, inclusive and open a manner as possible. Where it is relevant, I will also engage with and involve civil-society representatives and others, such that a multi-stakeholder approach becomes a hallmark of my presidency.

I will also work closely with Committee Chairs and continue the tradition of coordinating, of course, with the Secretary-General as well as the Presidents of the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council to ensure the smooth and timely conduct of business.

With the cooperation of members, I am confident that we can make substantial and meaningful progress across this broad agenda.

It is, in some respects, hard to believe that this great Organization has already been in existence for 70 years. For, despite its significant evolution and achievements since 1945, the United Nations has much more to learn, much more to give and much, much more to do to fulfil its mandate under the Charter and to bring about the world envisaged by the 2030 Agenda.

Let us be clear: we are here, the Assembly of the world's nations, to help one another and the Organization to move towards that vision, through a spirit of global solidarity and with a renewed commitment to action.

I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: It is a great pleasure to be here today to open the seventieth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. President, I wish to congratulate you once again on your election. Your wide-ranging experience as Foreign Minister, Finance Minister and Speaker of the Danish Parliament bodes well as you take on your new responsibilities.

Much important work lies ahead.

World leaders will gather at the highest level to adopt the landmark 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Member States are also moving towards a meaningful and universal agreement on climate change in December this year. The United Nations system is readying itself to support achieving the new Goals. Financing will be a crucial and early test of commitment, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda provides important guidance.

In the weeks ahead, the General Assembly will deepen its discussions on my new report on the future of United Nations peace operations and on the review of our peacebuilding architecture. These efforts, along with the 10-year review of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, can help us strengthen our responses at a critical time.

A number of major milestones are on the 2016 calendar.

The high-level debate of the General Assembly on the world drug problem is expected to take place in April. I encourage Member States to arrive at common solutions on how to address this threat to people and communities. The need for a shared global responsibility has never been greater. No country is immune, just as no nation can address this challenge alone.

The third United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat III), to be held in Quito in October, can showcase what works and help steer the world's cities and settlements onto a more sustainable path.

The World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in Istanbul in May, comes at a time when nearly 60 million people have been displaced by conflict and violence — more than at any other time since the Second World War. Human suffering and economic losses from disasters caused by natural hazards are increasing. And yet, just over one third of humanitarian funding requirements for this year have been met. The leadership of all Member States is critical to make the changes that are needed to address pressing humanitarian challenges and build a safer world for all. I urge them to continue to give the summit process their full support.

(*spoke in French*)

This session marks the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The principles enshrined in the Charter have stood the test of time, and the United Nations can look back on a record of achievement. At the same time, we know that suffering remains widespread across the world. My thoughts today are especially with the people of Syria: those inside the country facing terrible violence, and those who have fled, desperately seeking a safe haven in order to begin a better life.

This seventieth session of the Assembly must be one of compassion, prevention and, above all, action.

We in the Secretariat and I personally look forward to providing our full support to you, Mr. President, and to all Member States in upholding our responsibilities to today's and succeeding generations.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

Item 138 of the provisional agenda

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/70/374)

The President: Next, I would like, in keeping with established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/70/374. It contains a letter from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly, in which he informs the Assembly that five Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I would like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years".

May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the information contained in document A/70/374?

It was so decided.

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Credentials of representatives to the seventieth session of the General Assembly

(a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee

The President: Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly at the beginning of each session shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

Accordingly, it is proposed that, for the seventieth session, the Credentials Committee should consist of the following Member States: Argentina, Austria, Barbados, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, South Africa and the United States of America.

May I take it that the States that I have just mentioned are hereby appointed members of the Credentials Committee?

It was so decided.

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Organization of work of the seventieth session of the General Assembly

Letter from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences (A/70/366)

The President: The Assembly will now turn its attention to document A/70/366, which contains a letter dated 8 September 2015 from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences addressed to the President of the General Assembly. Members are aware that, pursuant to section 1, paragraph 7, of Assembly resolution 40/243, of 18 December 1985, no subsidiary organ of the General Assembly should be permitted to meet at United Nations Headquarters during the main part of a regular session of the Assembly, unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

On the strict understanding that meetings would have to be accommodated within available facilities and services, authorization is thus sought for the following subsidiary organs: the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East; the Disarmament Commission; the Committee on

Relations with the Host Country; the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to authorize these subsidiary organs of the Assembly to meet during the main part of the seventieth session of the General Assembly?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.